

Mr. Cotton's
S E R M O N,
At the
O R D I N A T I O N
of his *Brother.*





*Ministers of the Gospel should speak, not
as pleasing Men, but G O D, who tries
their Hearts.*

A
S E R M O N

Preach'd at the *Ordination* of the Rev.

Mr. *Ward* Cotton,

At *Hampton*, in *New-Hampshire*,

June 19th. 1734.

When he was Ordain'd a Colleague-
Pastor with the Rev. Mr. *Nathanael*
Gookin, Pastor of the first Church
there.

By *JOHN COTTON*, A.M. K

Minister of the Gospel in *Newtown*.

B O S T O N:

Printed by *B. Green*, 1734.

Ministers of the Gospel should be
of the same mind, but C. D. who was
their friend.

S. E. R. M. O. N.

Proclamation of the Government of the R.

Mr. W. H. Cotton

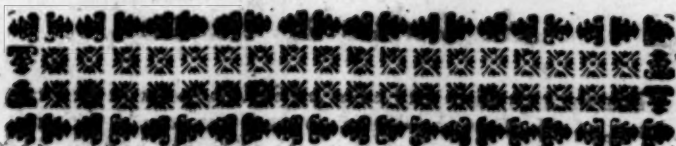


It was the duty of the College
to give to the world a new
Gospel, that of the Holy Spirit.

JOHN COTTON A.M.

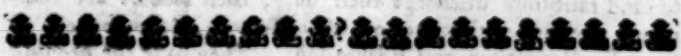
Minister of the Gospel in New York

1827
Printed by A. Green



An Ordination

S E R M O N.



I. THESS. II. iv.

But as we were allowed of GOD to be put in Trust with the Gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing Men, but GOD which trieth our Hearts.

WHAVE in our Context, an Account of the Apostle's manner of preaching, and his comfortable reflection upon his entrance in, among the *Thessalonians*. And as he had the testimony of his own Conscience to his integrity, so he could appeal to the *Thessalonians*, how faithfully & successfully he, and *Silas*, and *Timotheus*, his fellow helpers in the work of the Lord, had discharg'd their Office. *You your selves, brethren, knew our entrance in unto you, that it was not in vain.* It is no little comfort to a Minister of the Gospel, to have his own Conscience, and the Consciences of others witnessing for him, that he set out well, with good designs, and from good principles, and that his preaching has not been in vain; that is, say some, it was not vain in the matter, we did not preach about vain, useless and unprofitable niceties and speculations, but our preaching was substantial, sound and solid, such as was most likely to profit our hearers. It was not vain in the manner (say others) it was not undertaken rashly, and without a Call, nor manag'd in a slight and vain manner.

BUT the expression may more particularly point at these two things, (1) That the divine power [accompany'd their ministrations, and confirm'd them in the faith that heard it, and the gracious assistances vouchsafed to them, confirm'd them in the expectation of success. And, then (2) That their expectations were not disappointed, but answered in the great success given to their ministry; for the word *vain* when it is apply'd to the messages, the *Ministers of Christ* bring, signifies the not accomplishing the great ends for which they are sent. It is us'd to this purpose, in Isa. 55. 11. *The word that goeth out of my mouth shall not return to me in vain, but prosper, &c.*

WE may hence learn that where Ministers are regularly call'd to, and faithfully discharge their duty, their labours are commonly attended with more or less of success, either sooner, or later, for Conversion and Edification. They have the promise of Christ's gracious presence with them, and if they are faithful, they shall have the presence of his power to strengthen them, and of his blessed spirit to succeed them.

THOUGH sometimes they may not have any great visible success at present; yet it may comfort such, that there may be good done by their ministry notwithstanding, and if they don't reap the fruit of the seed they sow, they who come after them may. But if it should be so, that neither they, nor their people reap fruit, their ministry shall not be in vain with reference to *themselves*; for they shall be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, though *Israel* be not gathered.

IN the 2d v. the Apostle tells them of the great difficulties which he encounter'd at his first coming among them to preach the Gospel, but yet these did not at all discourage him from preaching the Gospel with constancy and resolution. He was notwithstanding *bold in God to speak unto them the Gospel of God*. He was inspir'd with an holy boldness, and went on courageously in his work, notwithstanding any opposition that was made against him, or ill usage he met withall, from any of those to whom he was sent. It was a zealous boldness in the cause of God, and prov'd convincing unto many. It is one necessary and commendable qualification in the Ministers of the Gospel, in order to the making their ministry successful, that a wise, humble, zealous and convincing boldness be found with them in their delivering the truths of God unto their People. *We were* (says the Apostle) *bold in our God, to speak unto you the gospel of God.*

In my Text, and the verse immediately preceding it, he tells us something of the manner of his preaching, that it was with great simplicity and godly sincerity; for our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile; but as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the Gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God which trieth our hearts. We may here Note, that the Apostle calls his preaching an Exhortation; doubtless because a great part of his preaching was (as ours ought to be) applicatory and exhortatory, earnestly and affectionately exciting the hearers to cleave unto the truths, whether doctrinal or practical, delivered to them.

He declares to them, that it was the sincere and uncorrupted Gospel that he preach'd, and exhorted them to believe and obey. His design was not to set up a faction, to draw men over to a party, but to promote pure Religion, and undefiled before God and the Father. The Gospel he preach'd, was without deceit; it was not of ensnaring and seducing error, nor suited to the corrupt opinions and wicked inclinations of Men. Nor was it of Uncleanness; his Gospel was pure and holy, worthy of its holy Author, tending to discourage all manner of impurity: Nothing that he either preach'd or practis'd, did countenance or encourage men in the gratification of their lusts, as did the erroneous preaching of the false Apostles. And as the matter of his preaching was Pure, so the manner of his speaking was without guile, i. e. he did not seek himself under a pretence of acting for God and his glory, nor propound his own worldly advantage as his ultimate end. He had not sinister aims, but was in reality what he seem'd to be. The Ministers of Christ should not only preach the pure word of God, but preach it purely, in simplicity of heart, and with a single eye at the glory of God, without looking at, or having any regard to base sinister ends, or by-respects.

He would assure them, that his main design was to approve himself to G O D, that he might have the divine approbation; not so much, or at all, regarding to please Men, but only in subordination to God. And in the words read, he gives us the reasons or motives inducing him to it. (First) He was put in trust with the Gospel, allowed of God to be so. God fitted him for this high and honorable trust, and improv'd him therein; and he looked upon both as a favour and honour done him by the great God. The other motive was the consideration of God's omniscient and all-seeing eye upon him, as well knowing that the heart-searching God was a witness both of his Doctrine and Conversation, acquainted with his aims and ends, and therefore he so preach'd not as pleasing men, but God. AND

AND what is there that can, or should more powerfully excite the Ministers of Christ, to the faithful discharge of their duty, than the consideration of the honour and weight of the great trust reposed in them, and the eye of an heart-searching God continually upon them!

He goes on in the two next verses, to produce the evidences of his sincerity; the *First* is, that he did not use *flattering words*, to gratify the lusts and humours of men, to gain their favour or good opinion of him, nor did he flatter them in their sins. Flattery in any, is very odious; but more especially is it so in the Ministers of Christ. They should be plain-hearted and faithful in their dealings with men, because flattery about things of a spiritual nature is most pernicious and fatal. *Secondly*, He did not use a *Cloak of Covetousness*; he had no covetous design in his Ministry; he did not propose to gain any outward or worldly advantage to himself. He solemnly appeals to God, who searches the heart, as a witness of the truth of this. He also declares, how free he was from all ostentation and *vain-glory*: He did not seek or desire applause from men, nor indeed so much as due respect in a fitting maintenance from them, tho' he does at the same time assure them, he did therein remit of his *Right*, seeing as an *Apostle of Christ*, he might be *burthen-some*, i. e. chargeable to them, by exacting a fit and honourable Support from them, which some might be too ready to think, would be too great a burden for them to bear. We may from hence Note, that tho' the Ministers of Christ, may and should have a due respect to their own honour and reputation, yet eagerly to seek after respect and esteem, does savour too much of vanity and vain glory. We may also learn, that though the Ministers of the Gospel have an undoubted right to an honourable Support, yet it may be a point of prudence in them to remit that right, for some special reasons.

THE Apostle proceeds in our Context, to give an account of his humble, holy, meek, courteous and affable behaviour among them, by all expressing his tender Love and Affection to them, in which he has set an example for all Christ's Ministers to follow.

HAVING thus open'd and paraphras'd upon the *Text*, and *Context*, I come to the *DOCTRINE*, which I-design for our present Instruction and Improvement, viz,

DOCT.

An Ordination Sermon.

5

DOCTRINE.

THAT the Ministers of Christ, or such as are allowed of GOD to be put in trust with the Gospel, should make it their great care, study, and endeavour, so to speak, not as pleasing Men, but GOD, who tries their Hearts.

THERE are two Propositions contain'd in this Doctrine,

I. *THAT some are allowed of GOD, to be put in trust with the Gospel.*

II. *THAT such should make it their great concern and endeavour, so to speak, not as pleasing men, but GOD, who tries their Hearts.*

PROP. I. *SOME are allowed of GOD to be put in trust with the Gospel.*

AND these are Christ's Ministers, regularly call'd and set apart to the work of the Gospel-Ministry. The Lord Jesus Christ has instituted a standing Gospel-Ministry in his Church, to continue to the end of the World. It is his Sovereign Will and Pleasure, that there should be an Order of Men to represent his Person, publish his Laws, exhibit the promises & administer Seals and Censures; this is evident from the promise of Christ's presence to be with his Ministers to the end of the World, *Matt. 28. 20.* and because the reason of such an institution of Men to this service will always continue. Now with these 'tis the Gospel intrusted; they are allow'd of GOD to be put in trust with the Gospel. It is GOD, who raises them up, who giveth and qualifies them for serving their Generation in the Gospel of his Son, and inclines their hearts to engage therein.

THEY are authorized from Christ, the King and Head of his visible Church and People, to discharge the Office of Gospel Ministers. They receive their Commission from him. And they are introduc'd into their awful Station by Persons authorized by Christ thereunto. They are by the Imposition of the Hands of the Presbytery, and solemn Prayer, set apart to the Gospel Ministry, and so bro't under solemn bonds & obligations, and endow'd with all the privileges & powers that belong to that sacred Office. They hereby become true Ministers of the Lord Jesus Christ, according to the direction and institution of the Gospel; and so they are put in trust with the Gospel, are commissioned to preach the glad tidings of Salvation to a miser-

able World. The Ministry of Reconciliation is given to them, 2. Cor. V. 18. The word of reconciliation committed to them, ver. 19. and they are Embassadors for Christ, as we read in the 20th ver. *Now then we are Embassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled unto God.* Their Office is here set forth under the name of an Embassy; *We are Embassadors for Christ.* The Lord Jesus Christ was himself an Embassador sent from God, to establish a Covenant of peace betwixt God and Men; he treated with and intreated Sinners to be reconciled unto God. The Son of God, the Prince of peace, came to minister to Men, and make peace between God and them. All the while he was on Earth, he was performing, as it were, the work of an Embassador to Men. He is now exalted to God's right hand, and comes not to the world personally any more, untill he shall come to Judge the World. He is now Head over all things to his Church, he is King and Lord of his People; and he now allows us sinful worms (such is his condescension and grace) to be put in trust with the Gospel; he sends such forth into the World as his Vice-gerents and Embassadors, to manage the affairs of his Kingdom among Men, to publish the Gospel of reconciliation, the proclamations of peace, to the apostate, rebellious children of Men, and to propose the conditions of peace, and terms of reconciliation. We read in the 10th Chap of Luke, that when Christ sent out his Disciples to preach the Gospel, he said to them, *into whatsoever House ye enter, first say, Peace be to this House.* The Gospel is called the Gospel of Peace, Rom X. 15. and of Grace, Acts XX. 24. where the Apostle says, *But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto my self so that I might finish my course with joy, and the Ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God.* Ministers of the Gospel are sent to preach Peace by and thro' Jesus Christ, to offer a Covenant of peace and reconciliation, to make a proclamation of pardon to guilty condemned Rebels. They act in Christ's name, on his behalf; he gives them their instructions, puts words into their mouths. The solemn Charge given to them at their Ordination, is in the Name of Christ; they preach the Gospel in his Name, and so with authority and power. And what they deliver agreeable to the Oracles of God, it is the word of God and not of Man, and accordingly to be attended to, and regarded by us. In his Name they invite Sinners to come to him for life; in his name they command them to repent, believe and obey the Gospel. In the name of Christ they administer the holy Sacraments of Baptism and the Lords Supper. In his name they reprove, rebuke and exhort. Thus are the Ministers of the Gospel
in

An Ordination Sermon.

7

in Christ's stead treating with Men, being allowed of God, and put in trust with the Gospel to do so. Some are thus favour'd and honour'd of God.

BUT this may suffice for the first Proposition: We may now make some *Improvement* of it, before we pass to the next.

AND

USE. I. *HOW thankful should we be for the Divine Compassions herein express'd and manifested towards us miserable Sinners!*

It is wonderful condescension in the great God, that he will have any thing to do with us in a way of Mercy. After our Apostacy from God he might justly have cast us off for ever, have got himself everlasting honour and glory, in making us the flaming Monuments of his Justice. The Curses of the Covenant violated by us, might have forever fallen on our guilty Heads, and God and his Throne been clear and guiltless forever; but the Bowels of Divine compassion yern'd towards us, and the Lord in his pity and love has redeemed us. When we were cast out in the open Field to the loathing of our Persons, he then said unto us, Live, and the time was a time of Love. Yea, from all eternity had the blessed God thoughts of Mercy concerning us, and in the fulness of Time sent his dearly beloved Son, to become our Surety, and to make Satisfaction to offended Justice; which he has effectually done by his obedience, sufferings and death: So that God may now be just, and yet justify and save miserable perishing Sinners. But who now must manage the treaty of peace and reconciliation, to be upheld and carry'd on with such? The Angels might have been commission'd for this design and purpose, and it would have been an extraordinary favour to have had offers of peace and reconciliation made to us by them; but yet such has been the divine goodness and condescension, that the Lord appoints and authorizes some of our fellow creatures, of the same make and frame with ourselves, whose terror may not make us afraid, to treat with us about the great concerns of our precious and immortal Souls, to shew to us the way of life, and persuade us to walk therein. How gracious is this condescension, and how thankful should we be for it! how much more suitable and agreeable is it to us, than to have been treated with by Angels, tho' far superiour to us, who would rather have terrified and amaz'd, than instructed and persuaded us? Their appearance might have been very awful to us; but it's not likely their Mission would have been so suitable to us, in our present corrupt and infirm state. We should have been, it's probable, more ready to fly from and avoid them, than think

of a familiar converse with them: which we may now have with those, whom the Lord has commissioned to make tenders of peace and salvation to us, who are Men subject to like passions with ourselves, Men who must be saved in the same way and method others are; Men that have the same workings of sin and unbelief that you have, that may be exercised with the same temptations, you are, and so may be by experience the better qualified to guide and direct you, under those doubts and difficulties and temptations, that may perplex and distress you. They are or should be easy of access, that you may freely and readily go to them, and lay your Cases before them for Advice and Direction. Perhaps they may be able to comfort you with the same comfort, wherewith they themselves have been comforted of the Lord. They'll be instrumental to help you over and through the very difficulties that they themselves, it may be, have been conflicting with. They can more feelingly sympathize with you in your days of distress and trouble. In many other ways they may be serviceable to you; surely then, you should be very thankful to God, that your Eyes see teachers, to whom you can with an humble freedom have Access, and make known your fears and desires, when and as frequently as you please.

SUCH condescensions of the grace of God, should be very thankfully acknowledged by us; that God should send to us some of our brethren to preach repentance and remission of Sins, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by them offer salvation to us on such reasonable Terms, and by them so familiarly urge us to a compliance with them. Glory and praise to God in the highest should be ascribed, for such good will towards Men.

USE II. WE may from what has been said infer *the honour and regard there is due to Christ's Ministers.*

THEY are worthy of *double honour*, as they represent the glorious and *incarnate* Son of God. From him they receive their messages, their commission and instructions, They are his Deputies, act under him as their king and master. They ought certainly then, to have suitable honours and regards paid to them.

THE word of God enjoins it, that such be honourably supported, and that they be highly esteem'd, lov'd and obey'd, for they watch for your Souls, as those that must give an Account, that they may do it with Joy and not with Grief.

An Ordination Sermon. 9

I might infer

USE III. *THE sin and danger of abusing the Ministers of Christ.*

Do they speak to us in the Name of God, by his Authority? Do they represent the head of the Church, the blessed God incarnate and inthron'd in our Jesus? Must it not then be very sinful and dangerous to abuse them!

LET me warn all who hear me, to beware of this. Surely your Ministers have Work and Business enough, lying upon their hearts and hands; you need not add more. And know it, their Lord and Master, will tenderly and highly resent any indignities offered to his Embassadors. Abuse of Embassadors, sent by Earthly Kings, has ever by the Law of Nations been highly resented; we read also in Scripture of its being so. Let us then be ever cautious and afraid of abusing or injuring the Lord's Ministers. Let us be always disposed to cover their infirmities, and to make the most charitable construction of any thing said or done by them, that some may be dispos'd to improve to their prejudice; and be always cautious how we report what we hear concerning them, which it may be is altogether groundless. Let us be very careful how we treat the Embassadors of Christ.

Again,

USE IV. *WITH what solemnity and reverence should we attend to their Instructions.* If they come to us in Christ's Name, how concern'd should we be to give a due entertainment of their messages, that are of infinite moment and concern to us all.

USE V. *AND lastly here, Let us pray for the Lord's Ambassadors, that GOD would qualify them for their Work, that he would assist and prosper them in it. That the hand of the Lord may be with them, that many may believe and turn unto the Lord.*

BE thus asking the presence and blessing of the Lord, with all his Servants in the Ministry: and let me recommend this duty in a particular manner to *This Church and Congregation* of the Lord, with respect (*First*) to your worthy and beloved *Elder Pastor*; that GOD wou'd restore and confirm his health, and yet grant a door of utterance to him, that he may still labour among you in the word and doctrine, and be continued a rich blessing to you; and that GOD would sanctify the awful frown in his being to taken off
from

from his work among you ; and that those divine supports and consolations may be vouchsafed to him, which may delight and refresh his Soul in the multitude of his thoughts within him : And then, let me in the next place recommend this duty, with respect unto him, who may be allowed of God this day, to be put in trust with the Gospel, and to whom the care of your precious Souls is to be committed. We trust he is given to you this day in answer to your prayers ; and you must now more than ever bear him upon your hearts in your humble and fervent supplications to God for him. He is this day devoting himself to your service, to be your Servant for Christ's sake, to spend, and be spent for you. It is an awful Charge he is now going to receive from the Lord concerning you. He needs and he desires your Prayers. I beseech you then, *Brethren*, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with him in your prayers to God for him ; that his Service in the Gospel may be accepted of the Saints ; that he may come to you with joy by the will of God, and be refreshed ; that he may come to you in the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ ; that he may be made faithful to Christ, and to your Souls ; that he may *speake not as pleasing Men*, but God the searcher of hearts ; that he may be a happy instrument in the hands of God, of turning many here from the error of their ways, that many may be awaken'd and quickned by his Ministry, and brought savingly home to God, and that the Saints and Children of God may be edify'd and built up on their holy faith ; in short, that he may have many Seals of his Ministry among you, who may be his joy, and crown of rejoycing in the Day of Christ's appearing. To encourage your thus praying, let me tell you, your prayers for him may be greatly serviceable to the success of his Ministry among you. O beg of God to give the increase, with whom alone it is, and to whom alone the praise must be ascribed. Cry to God day and night for the success of his labours among you, that he may not labour in vain and spend his strength for nought, that the word dispensed by him may be a savour of life unto life, and not of death unto death unto any of you. In this way you may hope to have his Ministry made truly profitable to your Souls, and if the Lord shall please to make it so, he can desire no greater comfort or honour in this World.

HAVING thus consider'd and improv'd my first Proposition ; I proceed to the other.

PROP. II. *THAT such as are allowed of God to be put in Trust with the gospel, should make it their great care, study and endeavour, so to speak, not as pleasing Men, but God, who trieth our hearts.*

HERE

An Ordination Sermon.

II

HERE I shall enquire, and as briefly as I can shew:

1. What may be meant or implied in God's trying our hearts;
2. What by our speaking, *not as pleasing Men.*
3. When we may be said to speak, *as pleasing God.*

And then

4. *and lastly,* Why we shou'd make it our great concern and endeavour, so to speak, *not as pleasing Men, but God.*

I am to shew,

1. *WHAT* may be imply'd in God's trying our hearts. And,

1. THIS certainly implys in general, *that God is omniscient.* That all things are naked & open before the eyes of that GOD, with whom we have to do, even the thoughts and intents of the Heart. That his eyes are as a flame of fire, running to and fro through the earth, beholding the evil and the good; that he may shew himself strong on the behalf of those whose hearts are upright with him. That he searches the hearts and the reins of the children of men, that he may give to every one according to their ways and the fruit of their doings. Hereby may be meant that the great GOD has a perfect knowledge of all persons and things, and sees them all, even that which is most hidden and secret: That there is not a word in our tongue, nor a thought in our heart, but he knows it altogether.

Again,

2. GOD's trying our hearts may imply and mean his critical inspection and regard, *as to the ends and designs we propose in undertaking the work of the Ministry.* When we engage in the work of the Ministry, or any other business of importance, we have our several aims, ends and designs; and we are too prone to be led and carried on by corrupt and sinister views and designs, and to have no sincere aims at the advancement of the glory of GOD, or the good and benefit of others. But now, the omniscient God critically regards the views and ends, which govern and influence us in the prosecution of our duty. And this may be meant by his trying our hearts, that the Lord does especially and accurately look to the ends we propose and are govern'd by, in the undertaking and prosecuting the work and duty incumbent on us, in our several places and stations, and especially in the awful station of the Ministry.

I proceed now to enquire

2. WHAT may be meant by *our speaking not as pleasing Men*, Or, when we may be said, to *speak not as pleasing Men*. Before I answer, I would briefly premise; that in some cases, we should and ought to please Men. We find that the Apostle himself in some cases sought to please Men. 1 Cor. X 33. But he pleased not Men, nor should we, when it stands in competition with pleasing GOD. Otherwise the rule takes place with all, which we have given us in Rom. XV 2. *Let every one of us please his neighbour, for his good to edification.* The Ministers of the Gospel may and should endeavour to choose out acceptable words, that may be pleasing to their hearers. They may endeavour to please Men, in their speaking, so they do but faithfully and plainly tell them their duty. And indeed this should be pleasing to Men; but alas it's too often very unpleasing and ungrateful. But to proceed, by way of Answer,

1. *WE speak not as pleasing men, when we bear our Testimony against the Sins they live in.* Such as are in a carnal unconverted state, are not pleased with our so speaking. We speak, not as pleasing such, when we faithfully warn them to abandon the evil ways and practices they are living and indulging themselves in. When we tell them, such ways lead down to the chambers of death, and that they are hastening to a damnation that slumbers not; when we tell them of the snares, fire and brimstone and an horrible tempest that shall be the portion of their cup, unless they repent and turn; when we declare to them that if they cease not wandering out of the way of understanding, they shall go down to the congregation of the dead, have their portion appointed them with hypocrites and unbelievers, where they shall weep and wail and gnash their teeth forever; when we declare to them, This will be the end of the way they are walking in, and solemnly warn them to forsake the paths of the Destroyer; When we thus will not let them go on quietly in their sins, we then speak, *not as pleasing Men*. And such won't regard what we say, because we don't speak smooth things to them, but hard sayings which they cannot bear. They'd mind us, if we wou'd prophesy smooth things to them, flatter them in ways of sin, and let them go on securely. Of such the holy prophet Isaiah complain'd in his time, in the 30th Chap. *This is a rebellious people, living children, children that will not hear the law of the Lord, which say to the Seers, see not, and to the Prophets, prophesy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits, get you out of the way, turn aside out of the path, cause the holy one of Israel to cease from before us.* They forbid the Prophets speaking to them in GOD's Name, and

and dealing faithfully with them. One says * upon this place, It was their privilege, that they had seers among them, but they did what they could to put out their eyes; they had prophets among them, but they did what they could to stop their mouths, for they made them uneasy in their wicked ways. The prophets told them of their faults, and warn'd them of their danger, and they could not bear that: they must speak to them smooth things, must flatter them in their sins, and say they did well, and there was no harm, no danger in the course of life they liv'd; let a thing be never so right and true, if it be not smooth, they will not hear it, but if it be agreeable to the good opinion they have of themselves, tho' it be never so false, and never so great a cheat upon them, they would have it prophesied to them. They were for being let alone to do as they pleas'd, and therefore bid their faithful monitors to stand out of the way; but the faithful prophets of the Lord won't be diverted from using such expressions as are proper to awaken sinners, tho' they may perhaps be displeasing enough to them; such must be told, that God is holy, and they shall find him so, sooner or later, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear. Thus he.

BUT this may suffice for the first particular; the Ministers of Christ speak, *not as pleasing men*, when they bear their faithful testimony against the vicious ways and courses they indulge themselves in, and warn them of their danger of a damnation to be trembled at, if they die in their sins.

Again.

2. *WE speak, not as pleasing men, when we are from time to time earnestly and faithfully calling on, and urging them to their duty.* When we are, from one time to another, admonishing men for their neglects of duty, and calling on them to keep the commandments of GOD diligently; to deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow the Lord Jesus Christ; to renounce their lusts, to cut off their right hand, and to pluck out their right eye sins. To be called on, to exercise such mortification and self-denial, is not at all pleasing to the corrupt and carnal hearts of men: They don't love to be urged to that which is so contrary to the natural bent and disposition of their hearts. It is not therefore pleasing to them, to urge them to the duty of *repentance*, to hate and forsake their beloved lusts; nor to the duty of *believing* in Christ, to renounce all righteousnesses of their own, and come to Christ, poor and miserable, blind and

* Mr. Henry.

naked, and venture their eternal salvation on his merits and righteousness alone, to take his yoke & burden on them ; this is a hard saying, it is not at all pleasing to them : Nor is it so to be urged to *obedience*, to a strict observance of the commands of GOD. They are not to be so restrained. They choose to walk at large. Such *restraints* are not (I say) at all pleasing to them ; and therefore when they are urged to a strict regard to the will and command of GOD, as to a sober, righteous and holy living, it is *not pleasing* to them. There is no one instance of duty, we can urge them to a compliance with, but what their carnal hearts have a strong reluctance to.

Thus then we speak, *not as pleasing men*, when we are from time to time calling and urging them to their duty.

BEFORE I dismiss this enquiry, I might here particularly say ; the *Intemperate* man does not care to have his intemperance rebuk'd and declaim'd against. He cares not to read or hear of the many woes denounc'd against him for his rioting and drunkenness, though he is told from the word of GOD, that it *will at the last bite like a serpent, and sting like an adder*.

THE *unchaste* and *filthy* don't love to be admonish'd for their unchaste and filthy practices ; though the word of GOD declares they shall *never inherit the kingdom of God*.

THE *unrighteous* don't love to be so often rebuked for their injustice & oppression, and told of the wrath it exposes them to.

THE *liar* don't love to be reprov'd for his *lying* and *false speaking* ; though the word of GOD says, such must *have their part in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone*, where they shall never get one drop of water to cool their wicked tongues, which they so vilely employ'd in their life-time.

THE *covetous* don't love to be rebuked for their inordinate and anxious regards to the world, and things of it ; though they are like for ever to neglect the one thing needful, for the sake of this world, and so lose their Souls (by their folly) more worth than a thousand worlds.

THE *profane* person don't like to be reprov'd for his daring wickedness ; though he imprecates on his own head, the dire ul wrath and vengeance of a jealous GOD, and must swelter under it to all eternity, if he don't reform, and dread to take GOD's holy name in vain.

THE

THE *Sabbath-breakers*; such as are vain, rude & disorderly on God's holy day, don't care to hear the frequent reproofs given them in the name of the Lord; tho' if they should escape punishment from men, they can't escape the righteous judgment of God, who is jealous for the honour of his day, and will not let any profanations of it go unpunished. And so I might go on, as to several other instances of wickedness, alas! too common in the age in which we live, with respect to which men cannot patiently bear to hear their wickedness reprov'd, and the wrath of God denounced against them, which will certainly fall upon them, without a remarkable and thorow repentance and reformation.

By thus dealing with the children of Men in the publick dispensation of God's holy word, we may be said to *speak not as pleasing men*; when we thus reprove them for their wickedness, warn them of their danger, and urge them to reform, and do their duty, as they would avoid a most fearfully aggravated condemnation; which will else belong unto them.

BUT this may suffice in answer to the second enquiry, *when we may be said to speak, not as pleasing men.*

I proceed to the third Enquiry.

3. *WHEN may we be said to speak as pleasing GOD?*

Briefly here.

WE may be said to *speak as pleasing GOD*, when we propound the glory of God, and the best good of immortal Souls, as the great end of our *speaking*.

WHEN we endeavour plainly and faithfully to inform men of their duty, to shew them their sin and misery, and need of a Saviour. First, we must tell them of their *miserable* and undone condition, because of the first apostacy, of their being righteously involved in the guilt of it, and of their exposedness to the wrath of a righteous God while they continue in their natural state, and of their inability to help and save themselves. We should then tell them of the *hope* there is before them, of the provision made for them in the Lord Jesus Christ, who is able and willing to save them to the uttermost. That there is therefore hope concerning them, though their sins may have been of a crimson colour, and scarlet dye; that if they will confess and forsake them, and turn to the Lord, they shall find mercy and be abundantly pardoned. They must be told, that they

are of themselves, poor and miserable, blind and naked; that they must come to Christ humbly sensible thereof, renouncing all righteousness of their own, and be willing to venture the salvation of their Souls, on the merits and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. That they must receive him as their Lord and King, as well as Saviour; to have every sin and lust mortify'd and subdued in them. That they must make an intire sincere surrender and dedication of themselves to the Lord Jehovah, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, to serve him in holiness and righteousness all the days of their lives: And make his glory their governing design and aim, and the word of God their constant rule; and see to it, that they walk circumspectly, humbly and prayerfully. When we thus speak to our hearers, *we speak as pleasing GOD*, who has no pleasure in the death of the sinner, but had rather he would turn and live. It is therefore pleasing to him, to see his Ministers thus endeavouring to rescue poor miserable sinners from the destruction they are in such danger of, to see and hear them warning men of their danger, and setting before them the terrors of the Lord and his dreadful wrath; and perswading and urging them to fly for refuge to lay hold on the hope in the Gospel set before them, to be working out their own Salvation with fear and trembling, to be making their calling and election sure, to do with their might whatsoever their hand finds to do, to work while the day lasts, and make sure of an interest in the favour of God; to mind thus the things of their everlasting peace, before they are hid from their eyes. Such *speaking* is pleasing and acceptable to God, because 'tis the way and means he has in infinite wisdom instituted for the awakning, quickning and converting of men; and 'tis especially pleasing to him, if we do by so speaking sincerely endeavour to advance his glory, and the everlasting advantage of the precious Souls committed to us; so shall we act up to the great design of God in putting us into the Ministry, than which nothing can be more pleasing and acceptable to him. And thus I have briefly shewn, when we may be said to speak *as pleasing GOD*.

I come now to shew,

4. and Lastly. *WHT we should make it our great concern and endeavour, so to speak, not as pleasing men, but GOD.* We see this was the Apostle's great concern & care, and it should be ours.

It should be so, if we only consider, *that we cannot else be the faithful servants of the Lord Jesus Christ.*

An Ordination Sermon. 17

WE shall not be faithful to the trust reposed in us, if we don't make this our great concern and endeavour.

MINISTERS of the Gospel are Christ's servants by office; and as servants, they are to please their own master. *If I pleased men, saith the Apostle, I should not be the servant of Jesus Christ,* Gal. I. 10. And this made the Apostle have regard not only to his doctrine and outward conversation; but the inward aims and intentions of his heart; and expecting the reward of his labours more from God than men, he therefore sought to please God rather than men, and approve his heart unto him. And herein he reflects on those false Apostles, that sought to please men, that preach'd the law of *Moses* to please the *Jews*; or others that perverted and abus'd the doctrine of the Gospel to gratify the lusts of men. This our Apostle dared not to do; nor should any of the Ministers of Christ now: for it is required of such, that they be *found faithful*, 1 Cor. IV. 2. Now we can never be so, if our great care be to please men; we shall then be afraid to deal plainly, closely and faithfully with them: We shall be loth to disturb them in their security; shall choose to let them go on in their evil ways, undisturbed, rather than incur their displeasure, and so we shall prove unfaithful to God, and the Souls of men, and thus bring the guilt of blood upon our own heads. *Ezek. XXXIII. 7. 8. O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel, therefore thou shalt bear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me. When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die, if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require AT THINE HAND.* But if, on the contrary, we are faithful in delivering the whole counsel of God, if we speak whatsoever the Lord has commanded us, we shall keep our selves clear from the blood of all; as we see in the 9th ver. *Nevertheless if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it, if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity, but thou hast delivered thy Soul.*

SURELY then, for these reasons, it should be our great concern and endeavour to speak, not as pleasing men, but God who tries our hearts; for, if when we shall be called to give up our account to our omniscient and heart-searching Judge, we should be found unfaithful, we shall bring on our selves a most aggravated and intolerable condemnation.

I shall now make some Application of this Proposition.

And,

U. R. I. W.

USE I. WE may infer from what we have heard, *that it will be no great wonder, if Ministers should incur the displeasure of men.* Nothing has a greater tendency to do it, than a close and faithful dealing with them : it will be no wonder, if their corrupt and carnal minds be fretted, and galled thereby. Christ's Ministers then may expect, if they deal faithfully with men in their publick dispensations, or personal applications, to roil the spirits of some ; and perhaps the great enemy of Souls may set in, and endeavour to prejudice them against their Ministry, and so make it for ever unprofitable to them.

We may infer,

USE II. *HOW faulty such are, who are mainly, or too much concerned to please men.* Indeed as I have already hinted, Ministers should endeavour to choose out acceptable words, and be concern'd so to manage their publick performances that they may be pleasing, as well as profitable. But they should never prophesy smooth things, flatter men in their evil ways, or be afraid, of offending any by plain and faithful dealing. Nor should we take any pleasure in gratifying the itching ears of men. We should always carefully avoid such a stile or language as favours of vanity and affectation, which too often gratify's the itching ear, and is poorly accommodated to serve the perishing souls of men. I will recite here the words of an eminent divine * not impertinent to my present purpose. The affectation (says he) of Wit and flaming eloquence frustrates the end of preaching, which is to convince sinners of their guilt and misery, and by the conviction of conscience to make them fly to the sanctuary our blessed Saviour for protection ; partly, because those things that flatter the fancy, are not proper to affect the conscience : light trimmings of language, gaudy expressions, glittering points of Wit, please the imagination ; but conscience is excited and inflamed, by representing eternal things with powerful plainness and in a solemn manner. Thus he. --- Very faulty then are such Ministers as study more to please the Humours, than profit the Souls of Men.

USE III. Hence, *the Ministers of the Gospel should be above all things concern'd to please GOD, and approve themselves, to him, as those that have obtained mercy to be faithful.* They must endeavour, as they are able, faithfully to discharge their duty, whe: her men will regard the calls and warnings they give them,

* Dr. Bates.

or not. They should by all prudent methods endeavour to secure and maintain an interest in the hearts and affections of their People ; but if they can't do it without being unfaithful to GOD, and the Souls of Men, they had better lose their affections, tho' they suffer in their worldly interest, than incur the displeasure of their holy Judge.

USE IV. *PEOPLE should then be willing to be freely and faithfully dealt with by the Ministers of the Gospel.*

IF Ministers cannot else be faithful to GOD, and the Souls of Men, surely they ought never to be in the least offended at their plain and faithful dealing with them. They do it, because necessity is laid upon them ; and Wo will be to them, if they don't so warn and call upon Men. They see to their grief a necessity of it, because of the carnal security of the greater part of those, who have the Gospel preached to them. And it is the consideration of this, that moves them at one time and another to be preaching *Terror* to you. We can take no pleasure in it ; it is the most unpleasant part of our work in the Pulpit. It would be much pleasanter, to be encouraging your progress in the good ways of the Lord, and to be preaching lectures of *Consolation* to you, and setting before you the pleasures and joys of the world you are going to. (And blessed be GOD, this may be seasonably done also.) But it has been and is matter of sorrowful observation, that there is generally more need of awakning discourses, of setting before our People the terrors of the Lord and his wrath, because generally the greater part of our Congregations are carnally secure and careless about the concerns of their Souls, and a preparation for Death and Judgment. And it is for the sake of such in our Congregations, that we are from one time to another dispensing the warnings of the Lord. And would to GOD, all his people may be made willing to be freely and faithfully dealt with by the ministry they sit under, and take it as the greatest instance of kindness and love from their Ministers. If the spirit of the Lord, and his blessing does ever accompany his word so dispensed, as such preaching is acceptable and pleasing to GOD, so will it be to the Souls of those awakned and excited to their duty by it.

USE V. *THE last Use shall be a word of exhortation.*

- And here I shall address my self,
- 1. To my reverend Fathers and Brethren in the Ministry.
And,
- 2. To him who is this day to be put in trust with the Gospel.

I. TO my reverend Fathers and Brethren in the Ministry.

SUFFER me with all humility to recommend the example of the blessed Apostles here, for our imitation.

WE learn something of our duty from what we have heard: And would to GOD, we might be enabled so to discharge it, that we may be able to say, as the Apostle does here with his Brethren, and as he says in Rom. I. 19. *GOD is my witness, whom I serve with my Spirit in the Gospel of his Son.* It will be much for our comfort and honour, to have this testimony of our Consciences for us. And this we shall have, if we are diligent and faithful in the discharge of our ministry. We know it is required in Stewards (and therefore of us) that a man be found faithful. Let us be so then in declaring the whole counsel of GOD, and giving to every one their portion in due season.

LET us often consider the state and circumstances of our respective flocks and charges, and accommodate our selves to them in our publick administrations, by way of reproof and warning, counsel and comfort, as we apprehend they may stand in need thereof. Let us always beware of any fear of Men, that may bring a snare. Let us not be afraid of the faces of men, but faithfully deliver the messages and warnings of GOD to them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear. And alas! How many are there still, who are dispos'd to say, as the Prophet Jeremiah's hearers did, Jer. XLIV. 16 *As for the word that thou hast spoken to us in the name of the Lord, we will not harken unto thee.* It is truly a very sad consideration, that notwithstanding all the calls and admonitions which have been given, not only from the word, but amazing providences of God, there are so many yet settled on their lees, and going on incorrigibly in their evil ways, and will not be reclaimed. What need have we to bestir ourselves, with respect to such, and do our uttermost to pluck them as brands out of the burning! And let us encourage those who are asking the way to the Heavenly Zion, with their faces thitherward, and help them forward in the way of life, as workers together with God. Let us do what we can to help them over their difficulties and discouragements, greatly concerned that their convictions may issue in their saving and thoro' conversion to GOD.

AND let us follow all our sincere and faithful endeavours with our humble and fervent Prayers to GOD, that we may be not only faithful, but if the Lord please, successful; that we may have cause to rejoice with respect to many, yea all of our dear people, in the day of the Lord, that we have not run in vain, nor labour'd in vain. I

I shall now shut up all,

2. WITH a word to my *dear Brother*, at whose request I stand here this day. You are now coming into the service of the Gospel and of the Sanctuary, to which you have been devoted from your childhood, if the Lord would be pleased to qualify you therefor, and accept you therein. And we would fain hope, that it has pleased the Father of Lights, from whom comes down every good and perfect gift, not only to bestow on you desirable gifts and accomplishments for the work of the ministry, but also his renewing, sanctifying grace in an early conversion to GOD; and that so a happy foundation is laid, for your future serviceableness in the sacred and solemn work you are now engaging in: And we hope and trust, it's in answer to the many fervent prayers of those concerned with and for you, that a door is here opened for your entrance into this part of the Lord's vineyard.

I persuade my self, it has been your great concern, and earnest desire, that you might be sanctify'd of GOD, and so be fitted for your master's work and service here. I am persuaded, that the consideration of the duties and difficulties attending the important station you are entering into, does this day fill your heart with no little fear and care; so that you may now be ready to cry out, *Who is sufficient for these things?*

BUT be not discouraged; the grace and strength of Christ shall be sufficient for you. Exercise a lively faith in that gracious promise, and live upon it, *Math. XXVIII. 20. Lo! I am with you always.*

UNDER all the discouragements you may meet with, let this promise be a great support and comfort to you. You may expect to meet with various and heavy trials, difficulties and temptations, that may be not a little discouraging and perplexing to you, & which you may be at present a stranger to: Even your very faithfulness in the discharge of your duty, may expose you to some. But yet resolve, that by the grace of GOD helping you, you will as you are able faithfully warn Men of their sin and danger, and excite them to their duty, and do your utmost to gather them under the wings of their Saviour, before the things of their everlasting peace shall be hid from their eyes. Be much in prayer to GOD for his gracious presence with you, to succeed you in your work. You must give your self not only to the ministry of the word, but unto prayer. You must be a *Man of Prayer*, often wrestling with GOD, and resolving not

to let him go, until he bless you, and those also of your *Charge*, whom you will be often carrying in the Arms of your faith and prayer, to GOD, for his Blessing to descend upon. O plead often with him the many gracious promises, upon which he has caused you to hope, for your self, and for the Souls of your people; and beg that you may not labour in vain, and spend your strength for nought, that the word you preach may not be a savour of death unto death to any, but of life unto life to all. *Give no offence in any thing, that the Ministry be not blamed.* * Let your life and conversation witness for you, that you believe and live the doctrines you preach; so will you be an example to the believers. And if you thus take heed to yourself and to your ministry, you shall save your self, and may hope to save those that hear you. We trust that from a sincere love to the Lord Jesus Christ, you will feed the sheep, and feed the lambs of this Flock; and we wish that we may see and hear of remarkable tokens of his presence with you, and among this people, the care of whose precious and immortal Souls, we are now going in the name and fear of GOD, the Searcher of hearts, to commit unto you. Our sincere wishes for you, upon this solemn occasion, are, that you may not come into this awful station with the guilt of any iniquity cleaving to you; that GOD would be at peace with you, and now speak peace unto you; that He would take away your filthy Garments, and cloath you with change of raiment, and that when we shall presently lay our hands on your trembling head, the Holy Ghost may descend and seize on your Soul, and fill it with a new, pure and heavenly life and vigour, and those divine impressions, that you never felt in all your life before: That He may rest upon you in his gracious, sanctifying, enlightning and assisting influences and operations, to enable you to the faithful discharge of the great work you are now engaging in: That you may approve your self faithful to Christ and the Souls of this people; so will you be a sweet savour of Christ unto GOD, in them that shall be saved, and in them also that shall perish. But GOD of his infinite mercy grant, that none of *this Flock* may perish from under your ministry, but that you may be able in the day that is approaching, to say; *Here am I, Lord, and all the Souls, which were committed to my charge.*

In fine,

We wish you may be, for many years yet to come, a faithful and successful labourer in this part of the Lord's harvest, a

* 2 Cor. VI. 3.

great blessing and comfort to the Rev. elder Pastor, as well as to the Flock; and that when your ministrations in the Temple of GOD here, shall be finished, you may give up your account with joy and not with grief, and may hear from the mouth of your Judge, that blessed *Engel*, *Well done good and faithful servant*, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord! And having been wise, and turned many to righteousness, may you shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as a star for ever and ever, Amen and Amen,

F I N I S.



E R R A T A.

Page 14. line 5. for arc, read care p. 20. l. 7. r. Rom. I. 9.

6 AP64

